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Council to decide on approach to mayor's departure

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – It will be City Council President Todd McGee who will take over “Room 1” and the Holyoke City Council is looking at making sure McGee stays acting mayor through at least the November election.

Two weeks ago, Mayor Alex Morse announced he had been chosen to be the new town administrator in Provincetown, a small town at the end of Cape Cod on the other side of the state. Morse is in the midst of contract negotiations, which will also include a timeline to move and a start date for the actual position.

The current interim town administrator has a contract through the end of March, though it is unknown if that will need to be extended.

One thing that is certain, is that Morse will not be completing the end of his four-year term, the first four-year term since Holyoke moved the mayor's term from two to four years.

McGee said he and Morse have been in regular contact and McGee, per the city's charter, is prepared to

temporarily take on the role of acting mayor once Morse has departed.

McGee will have a challenging few months ahead as acting mayor with a number of department heads having departed with Morse on his way out.

The city council's Charter and Rules Committee will be discussing the options for a Home Rule Legislation resolution the full council must vote on soon.

At the very least, the council is seeking for the state to waive Holyoke's own charter, which requires a special election if the mayor resigns more than six months before an election.

Being the year of the election and the current pandemic conditions, as well as the cost of the holding an election, the council wants to waive the election requirement and have McGee serve as acting mayor for the remainder of the year.

However, one version of the home rule legislation also has the newly elected mayor taking over the city immediately after the election is com-

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Officer's viral video results in suspension

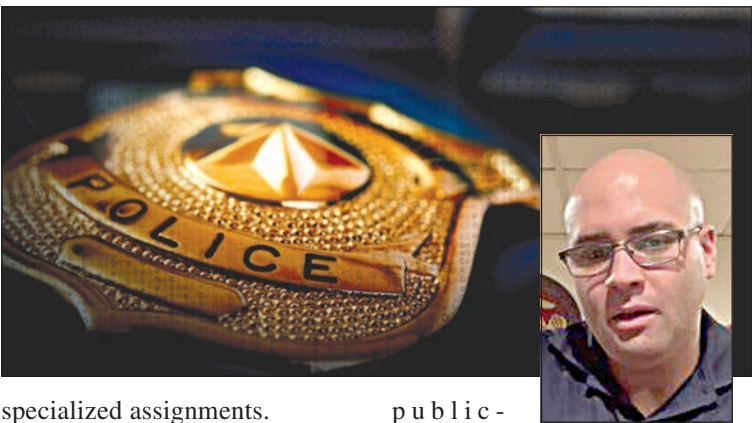
By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Police Department was brought under scrutiny during the past week when a police officer created and posted a YouTube video online accusing the department, specifically Chief Manny Febo of wrongdoing and corruption.

Holyoke Police Officer Rafael Roca posted a 43-minute tirade. He made claims the police department covered up lost weapons and claimed favoritism.

Following Roca's video release on Monday, Febo immediately responded to the video later in the week, addressing a number of the issues raised by Roca in a statement.

He first responded to Roca's claims about lack of opportunities for minority officers. Febo stated, “There are currently 46 total patrolmen with eight or more years of full-time experience on the job. Out of those 46, 12 are minority officers. Nine of those 12 are in specialized assignments other than patrol operations. That is roughly 75% of minority officers with 8 years or more in specialized assignments. Of the remaining 34 non-minority officers in this group, 18 are in a specialized assignment. That is roughly 53% of non-minority officers with eight or more years of experience who are assigned to



specialized assignments. “There are 38 officers total with six years or less of full-time experience. Of those 38, 17 are minority officers. There are only two officers in this group that are assigned to specialized units. One is a female who is being trained to investigate sensitive crimes involving children, females, and domestic violence. The other officer was chosen specifically due to his extensive knowledge and expertise in firearms. He is assigned to the ATF task force.

“The Holyoke Police Department has a Chief, two Lieutenants, and four Sergeants who are a minority in the department command staff.” Roca referenced an incident where a sniper rifle was lost by an officer. Roca claimed the weapon was stolen and it was covered up.

Febo said, “The incident was fully investigated by previous chief, discipline meted out, and every step was reported

publicly at that time.”

Another of the many issues brought up included a situation where a fire lieutenant was pulled over for a potential operating under the influence of alcohol. Roca claimed his superior put the fire lieutenant in protective custody instead of arresting him, essentially, “looking the other way.”

Febo also said in a statement that he welcomes any investigation in to the department and believes there is nothing to hide. Febo is set to retire later this year.

Febo, as well as Mayor Alex Morse, declined to comment on the status of Roca's employment. As is normal policy, officials do not comment on the actual discipline or employment status of officers because it is a personnel matter. Roca has publicly stated he believes

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VACCINE CLINIC HELD IN CITY



A mass vaccination was held by the VA in Holyoke on Tuesday with two sessions. The clinic was made available to veterans throughout the region as well as from northern Connecticut. It was held at the War Memorial on Appleton St.

Photo by Shelby Macri

Retirement board claims innocence, local communities disagree

By Dalton Zbierski
Staff Writer

AGAWAM – The Hampden County Regional Retirement Board did itself no favors during a March 3 conference call while fielding questions from town officials in the communities it represents.

An unsettling audit released last month by the MA Public Employee Retirement Administration Commission revealed that the Hampden County retirement board exceeded its budget and suspiciously spent approximately \$800,000 on inappropriate raises, false invoices, travel fees, fraudulent social security and other misappropriations between 2014 and 2018.



Richard Theroux

During last Wednesday's meeting, the board attempted to form a committee solely comprised of its own members to investigate its own wrongdoing.

After community members protested, the board unanimously voted to instead establish an audit committee consisting of two board members and a member of the Hampden County Regional Retirement Board Advisory Council.

“Isn't the audit committee the fox watching the hen house?” asked Hampden Board of Selectmen Chair Donald Davenport, audibly concerned by the chosen course of action.

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STCC to join ‘Building Bridges’ virtual conference

SPRINGFIELD – Springfield Technical Community College will host a session that focuses on demystifying college during the Building Bridges virtual conference on March 19, a free event for early childhood educators.

The full-day event features breakout sessions in English and Spanish led by educators from a variety of backgrounds and organizations, from college and university faculty to museum and library staff, among others.

Developed by a community-wide early literacy initiative in Springfield called “Reading Success by Fourth Grade,” the conference is designed for educators who teach children from birth to kindergarten age. However, anyone working in education is invited to attend, including paraprofessionals, workers in early intervention programs, family programming and others.

“We’re excited to be a part of this conference, which is the first of its kind,” said Jennifer Wallace-Johnson, an Early Childhood Education student liaison at STCC. “This is a valuable opportunity for early childhood educators, and it’s 100 percent free.”

STCC, one of several community partners, is helping to plan the conference in addition to presenting at the event.

“Having STCC as a player in the conference is a great connection to the community,” said Chrissy Howard, Reading Success by Fourth Grade program manager. “We’re excited that STCC is offering some of the Spanish speaking sessions. We need even more Spanish speaking



STCC will hold a program aimed at early childhood education on March 19.

Submitted photo

opportunities because of the diversity of the profession. Those are really sought out sessions.”

Howard said the purpose of the conference is to ensure that educators get free access to training.

“We want to increase access to high quality training that they normally would have to pay for,” she said. “Our goal is to make sure there is high quality early education for everybody, birth to five, wherever their setting is, whether it’s early childcare or preschool centers.”

Jennifer Wallace-Johnson and Lakisha Coppedge, also an Early Childhood Education student liaison, will lead the session titled “Demystifying

Higher Education Pathways: Understanding the Roadmap to College.”

The session will highlight college processes and help inspire people who might be thinking of returning to college and furthering their education. “We will provide a roadmap to college,” said Wallace-Johnson. “Focus will be placed on college readiness, barriers, and diverse program options through open discussion.”

Demystifying College will be presented in two sessions: one in English and the other in Spanish. Wallace-Johnson and Yezenia Lopez, academic advisor and adjunct faculty at STCC, will co-facilitate the same breakout session in Spanish.

Holyoke Public Schools staff now eligible for vaccine appointments

HOLYOKE – Massachusetts Gov. Charlie Baker announced Wednesday that teachers, early educators and school staff members will be eligible to begin signing up for COVID-19 vaccine appointments starting on March 11. The group includes about 400,000 people. Some mass vaccination sites are expected to set aside particular days to

vaccinate educators. More details will be released in the coming days. HPS has been working closely with Holyoke Health Center to develop a plan to offer the COVID-19 vaccine to HPS employees subject to the supply and demand of COVID-19 vaccine doses.

We will continue to share more information as it becomes available.

Hart named new Chamber director

HOLYOKE – The Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce has named Jordan Hart as its new Executive Director.

“Jordan brings a longtime commitment to Holyoke and to the Chamber to her new position,” said Board Chair Harry Montalvo of bankESB. “We are looking forward to her leadership in mapping out new strategies to work with our members as we emerge from the challenges of the past year.”

Hart will replace Andr  a Marion in the role. Marion recently announced her departure to pursue other opportunities.

“It is such an honor to serve our membership as their new Executive Director,” Hart said. “I have gotten to know many of our members and business leaders in our community since I started at the Chamber in 2013, and I look forward to bringing vibrancy and presence to our membership through new programming and collaborations as we emerge from the limitations imposed by the pandemic. And, of course, I’ll be excited to start seeing our members in person again soon.”

Well-known and respected in the community and among Chamber membership, Hart has served in a variety of roles in the past eight years at the Chamber, most recently as Program Coordinator. She is a Board Member at Enchanted Circle Theater and was a leader of the “Have a Ball in Holyoke” public art effort through Leadership

Holyoke. A Holyoke resident, she holds an Associate Degree from Holyoke Community College and is currently taking courses at Greenfield Community College. Jordan resides in the Oakdale neighborhood with her partner of 10 years and their 3-year-old daughter.

Among top priorities for the 131-year-old Chamber moving forward are reestablishing a solid suite of programming and seminars to support local businesses in their success, continuing to serve as a cheerleader for economic development and jobs growth in the city, and working with leaders throughout the area to bolster civic pride and quality of life in Holyoke and surrounding communities.

Key to Hart’s responsibilities will be collaborating closely with partners throughout the region, including leaders at City Hall. Aaron Vega, Director at the Office of Planning and Economic Development adds, “It’s great to see Jordan Hart take the reins of the Greater Holyoke Chamber of Commerce at this critical time. Jordan has been actively involved in every aspect of the Chamber work for over 7 years. I know Jordan is passionate about our city, supporting current business and attracting new businesses here. As Director at the Office of Planning and Economic Development I look forward to working with Jordan in her new role.”

Spring Things next for Wistriahurst

HOLYOKE – On Wednesday March 24 at 2 p.m., Wistriahurst will present Spring Things with Patti Steinman a live, virtual program presented on Zoom. This program is open to all members of the public, but has been specially designed to address the needs of area seniors, many of whom continue to be socially isolated as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. The program is free to attend, but spaces are limited and pre-registration is required.

Spring is a time for new growth, new migrants, and beauty all around. Join us to take a virtual tour of spring in New England by looking at wildflowers, birds, salamanders and more with Patti Steinman of Mass Audubon.

Thank you to the generosity of the

Alvarium Foundation for funding this program. The program is also supported through a Community Development Block Grant - COVID-19 Grant to address, prevent, and respond to the COVID-19 Pandemic that is administered through the Holyoke Office of Community Development and has been planned in consultation with the Holyoke Council on Aging.

To register for Spring Things with Patti Steinman, please visit www.Wistriahurst.org or contact Eileen Maginnis at the Holyoke Council on Aging at maginnise@holyokey.org. If you have an idea for a topic you’d like to be considered for a future Wistriahurst session, please contact info@wistriahurst.org.

Boyce-Taylor featured at poetry series

HOLYOKE – Award-winning poet Cheryl Boyce-Taylor will read as a part of the Paper City Poetry Series, presented by The Care Center, an educational and cultural resource center for young women who are pregnant and parenting. Boyce-Taylor’s reading will take place online Wednesday, March 10 from 1 p.m. to 2 p.m. The event is free and open to the public and registration required. To register email Poetry Program Coordinator Tara Bernier at The Care Center, at tbernier@carecenterholyokey.org.

Cheryl Boyce-Taylor pays tribute to her departed son, Malik “Phile Dawg” Taylor, of the legendary hip-hop trio A Tribe Called Quest in her newest intimate collection. Mama Phye Represents is an arresting document of the body’s lowest depth of hurt from a poet and mother who suddenly loses her son to Type 1 diabetes at the height of his musical career. It is a love letter from a grieving mother to her child. Boyce-Taylor is a poet and teaching artist. Her collections of poetry include Raw Air, Night When Moon Follows, Convincing the Body, and Arrival, which was a finalist for the Paterson Poetry Prize.

The Care Center’s visiting writers’ series features nationally-recognized poets and authors in an intimate setting. This

year the series is on line. The 2020 – 2021 lineup includes Mart  n Espada, Franny Choi, Marilyn Chin, Ross Gay, Layli Long Soldier, Cheryl Boyce Taylor and Leslea Newman. The Paper City Poetry Series is made possible in part by a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts and support from the Massachusetts Cultural Council’s YouthReach Program.

Each year more than 100 pregnant and parenting teens use The Care Center. Services include academic classes in preparation for the HiSet, college courses, on-site daycare, health care, counseling, assistance with the transition to higher education, and door-to-door transportation. Founded in 1986, The Care Center’s approach has led to regional and national recognition as a model of effective programming for young families. In 2019 The Care Center was presented with the Commonwealth Award by the Massachusetts Cultural Council. This recognition is given to organizations who provide extraordinary contributions to the arts, humanities, and sciences. In 2012 The Care Center was selected as one of twelve in the country to receive the Presidential Arts and Humanities Youth Program Award – the highest honor a program like this can receive.

Alcántara recognized for community commitment

HOLYOKE – Holyoke Community College student Miren Neyra Alcántara of Holyoke is the recipient of a Newman Civic Fellowship, which recognizes college leaders who demonstrate a commitment to finding solutions to challenges facing communities locally, nationally, and internationally.

Alcántara, who lives in Holyoke, will join 212 college students from 39 states, Washington, D.C., and Mexico to form the 2021 cohort of Newman Civic Fellows, a program administered by Campus Compact, a Boston-based nonprofit working to advance the public purposes of higher education.

The Newman Civic Fellowship is a year-long program for students from Campus Compact member institutions.

Alcántara is a Latinx Studies major at HCC and president of the college’s Latinx Empowerment Association. The LEA Club, as it is otherwise known, recently launched a book drive to stock a “Little Free Library” the club is putting together for low-income families in the Holyoke Flats, one of the city’s poorest neighborhoods.

As LEA president, Alcántara spearheaded “Celebrating the Latinx Community,” a social media campaign, and developed student-led panel discussions in collaboration with HCC’s

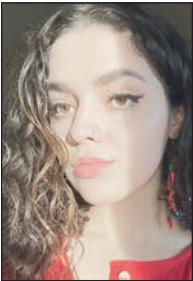
Black Student Alliance and Holyoke’s Wistariahurst Museum.

She is a member of the Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society and the college’s Student Advisory Board. She works as a peer tutor and volunteers with community organizations including Climate Change Theater Action, Common Share Food Co-op, and SPARK Reproductive Justice Now.

She also teaches English to Central American immigrants through a program called Planting Literacy, an HCC collaboration with Head Start in Springfield.

She was nominated for the award by two of her professors, Vanessa Martinez and Raúl Gutiérrez.

“We’re very proud of Miren,” said Gutiérrez, coordinator of HCC’s Latinx Studies program. “HCC is lucky to have her. Her academic endeavors combined with her involvement and leadership in the community make her a necessary agent of change. She truly embodies the essence of an activist scholar. Her academic abilities, compassion and leadership make her exactly what is needed in this world.”



Miren Neyra Alcántara

The fellowship is named for the late Frank Newman, one of Campus Compact’s founders and a tireless advocate for civic engagement in higher education.

Through the fellowship, Campus Compact provides fellows with a variety of learning and networking opportunities that emphasize personal, professional, and civic growth. Each year, fellows participate in numerous virtual training and networking opportunities to help provide them with the skills and connections they need to create large-scale positive change. The cornerstone of the fellowship is the Annual Convening of Fellows, which offers intensive skill-building and networking over the course of two days.

The fellowship also provides fellows with pathways to apply for exclusive scholarship and post-graduate opportunities. As part of the fellowship, students participate in some kind of civic engagement project of their own design.

“I am so excited about the fellowship and this opportunity,” said Alcántara, who was also named a finalist earlier this year for Business West

magazine’s “Young Woman of Impact” award. “I plan to continue working on the LEA Club’s “Little Free Library” project. We are hoping to expand on it, add some workshops with the children and adapt it in a way it becomes sustainable through the years as more students join and continue the club. I am also continuing my work with immigrant advocacy and Planting Literacy, as well as my recent involvement as a volunteer with the Women of Color Health Equity collective.”

She will graduate from HCC in December 2021.

This is the second time an HCC student has been awarded a Newman Civic Fellowship. Last year, Marley Friedrich of Amherst, HCC class of 2020, was a Newman Fellow. He is now a student at Amherst College.

“We are proud to recognize these extraordinary student leaders and thrilled to engage with them,” said Campus Compact president Andrew Seligsohn. “The experience of the last year has driven home to all of us that we need open-minded, innovative, public-spirited thinkers and doers. That is what Campus Compact is about, and the stories of our Newman Civic Fellows demonstrate that it is who they are.”

Students can now be registered for pooled COVID-19 testing

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Public Schools have announced the pooled COVID-19 testing program will be starting. The schools stated:

“We are excited to share that in an effort to prevent the spread of COVID-19, HPS will be offering a free COVID-19 pooled testing program for students and staff at our schools. By working together to test every student and staff member who opt into the program each week, we will keep our entire school community safer. Positive cases will be identified more quickly, which will reduce any potential spread of COVID-19 in our schools. We have been collaborating with the Massachusetts Department of Elementary and Secondary Education (DESE) and the Massachusetts Department of Public Health (DPH) and are delighted to join other school districts throughout the state that offer this program.

The pooled tests will be performed weekly with a shallow nasal swab for all participating students and staff members. Schools will receive the pool results within 24-48 hours.

If the result of the pool is negative, then all individuals are presumed to not

have COVID-19.

If the result of the pool is positive, then all individuals in the pool must be retested individually at school using the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Test. This test would be performed by your child’s school nurse using a nasal swab.

Since pooled testing does not give individual results, you will only be notified if your child requires this follow-up testing.

Additionally, the Abbott BinaxNOW Rapid Antigen Diagnostic Test is also available at all schools to test students and staff who show symptoms consistent with COVID-19.

Emails and texts have been sent this afternoon to families to:

Ask permission to regularly test their child as part of a free COVID-19 pooled testing program at school, ask permission to use the Abbott BinaxNOW rapid diagnostic test if their child exhibits symptoms consistent with COVID-19 while in school provide information about how to register their student through Project Beacon for this program.

We are aiming for 100% student and staff participation.

Local students named to St. Lawrence University Dean’s List

CANTON, NY – The following students have been selected for inclusion on St. Lawrence University’s Dean’s List for their academic achievements during the Fall 2020 semester.

Ngoc Tan is a member of the Class of 2023 and is majoring in psychology

and philosophy. Tan is from Holyoke and attended International School Ho Chi Minh City.

Frank Wotton is a member of the Class of 2022 and is majoring in mathematics and philosophy. Wotton is from Holyoke and attended.

Dean applications due in early March

HOLYOKE – Students in 8th-grade and above can apply to join the HHS Dean campus community Applications are due Mar. 13. Once applications are received, interviews will be scheduled between now and Mar. 26. These will be facilitated between the Dean Campus and your child’s sending school. Spots

are limited. If you have any questions, read the Admissions Policy and contact Laurie Denis ldenis@hps.holyoke.ma.us or Alan Gates agates@hps.holyoke.ma.us at 413-534-2071/72. (All applications received after Mar. 13 will be reviewed and a campus representative will be in touch with more information).



Spring sessions are starting at HCC on March 29.

Submitted photos

HCC spring session III classes start on Monday, March 29

HOLYOKE – It’s not too late to sign up for spring session classes at Holyoke Community College.

The final round of HCC’s Spring Flex Start series – Spring Session III – begins Monday, March 29, and runs for seven weeks. All spring semester courses conclude by Wed., May 12, 2021.

Students who enroll for Spring Session III have the opportunity to take a variety of different classes in a wide array of academic areas and can earn as many as four credits per course for a lab science, such as biology or forensic science.

These accelerated spring courses are being offered in anatomy and physiology, anthropology, biology, communication, Earth science, education, engineering, English, English as a Second Language, forensic science, history, human services, marketing, math, nutrition, philosophy, political science, psychology, social science, and sociology.

HCC introduced two “Flexible Fall” start dates last semester to accommodate students as they adjusted to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic. Full spring semester classes started Jan. 25 and run for 14 weeks. Spring semester

II classes began Feb. 16 and run for 12.

HCC will continue to offer multiple start dates during the fall 2021 semester.

“Students who are unsure whether starting in March is possible for them should contact the HCC Admissions office to meet one-on-one with an Admissions counselor,” said Mark Hudgik, director of Admissions. “If the March 29 start date doesn’t work, HCC has two summer sessions that begin on June 1 and July 6.”

Most spring session classes are still either fully online or “blended remote,” which means they include both asynchronous lessons and real-time virtual instruction.

A full list of classes for spring session II and III can be viewed at hcc.edu/spring.

HCC also offers weekly online information sessions for prospective students. Please visit hcc.edu/visit-campus for dates and times or to sign up.

For more information or to apply, please go to: hcc.edu/apply, call 413-552-2321, send an email to admissions@hcc.edu or go to the HCC website (hcc.edu) and click on the “Chat Now” box.

Poetry Corner

“Innocence Beyond – Your Part”

By Thomas J. Kennedy

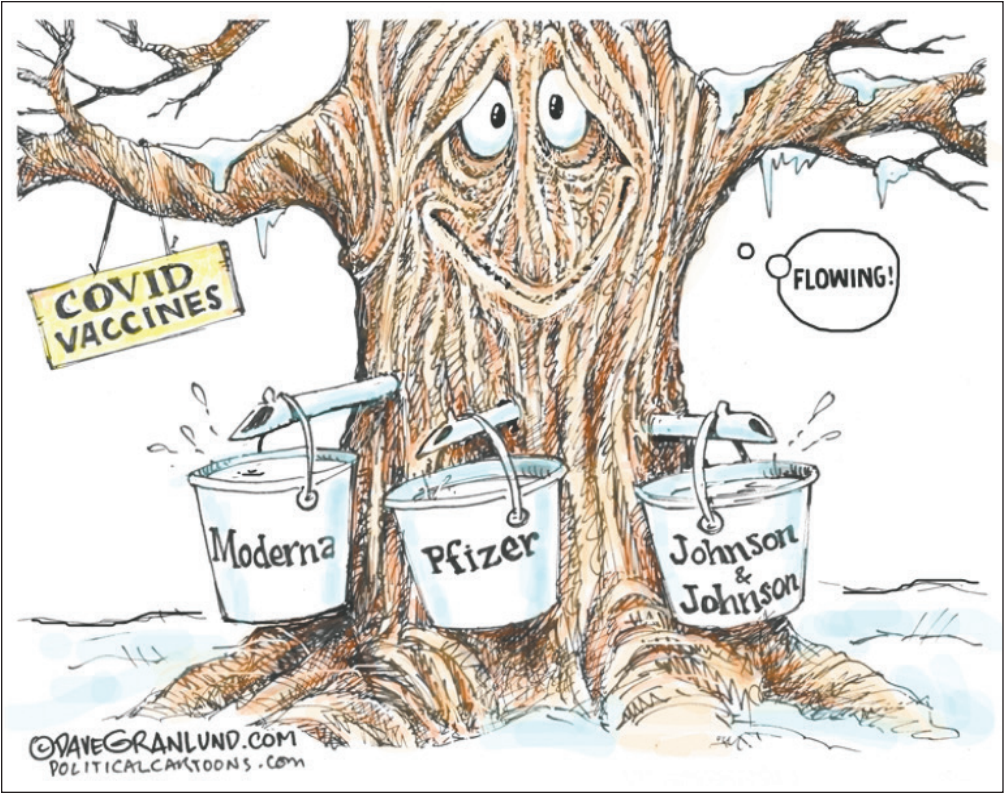
We need clarity not confusion
Too much anxiety and stress

Now starting today
Make a commitment to –
Laugh more, to smile more... More.
And give of yourself more.

Let your eyes sparkle
with kindness and heartfelt again
Reach down and help little ones
with a gift or smile.

Help get rid of fear and worry,
And delight in giving them love and support,
And God’s peace love and joy.

By protecting the little ones...
God you said: “Bring the children to Me
as they are innocent.
They deserve me more. With a little more...
More understanding.”



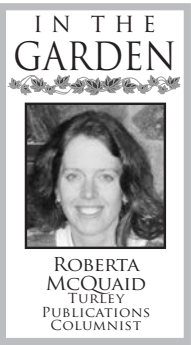
Guest Columns

Cabbage conundrums

I always feel a bit guilty on St. Patrick’s Day. What kind of Irish girl am I if I don’t particularly like corned beef and cabbage? Most of my life I found the meat too salty and the cabbage... well, too cabbagey. The past couple of years, though, in an effort to help my gut microbiome replenish itself after too many Lyme antibiotics, I began taking an interest in fermented foods. Sauerkraut has become one of my favorites.

Last year I met a woman at a Grange talk who had a basement full of sauerkraut she made herself. Intrigued and always up for a homesteading challenge, I decided then and there that I was going to grow enough cabbage to fill my basement, too. The only problem was that I never had much success with this vegetable. Sure, I’ve enjoyed a homegrown head or two, but a cabbage farmer I am not. Thugs, slugs, bugs and cracks, in that particular order, have always thwarted my best efforts. Read on to learn about my experiences as I went from growing a half dozen cabbage plants to over 30.

I sowed my cabbage seeds indoors off heat the second week of April last year. When the first true leaf appeared, I transplanted the seedlings into individual cells of six packs and watered with a liquid fertilizer diluted to half strength. Bright light but cool temperatures grew stocky plants, and by May 15 they were ready to be hardened off. They were



ROBERTA MCQUAID
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installed into the garden a week before Memorial Day. Most of the plants went into one of my rock-edged raised beds. I thought I was so smart. First I installed three-foot hardware cloth to keep out the bunnies (thugs), then I laid soaker hoses to and fro, knowing how these beds can bake in the heat and dry out daily. Cabbages aren’t what you would call heat-loving. If that wasn’t enough, I then covered the whole thing with a floating row cover, anticipating that the cabbage looper, the cabbage worm and the imported cabbage worm (all bugs) would visit and demolish my seedlings in no time. All my bases were covered, literally, and things were going great. The leaves began to pucker and curl: the seedlings were on their way to making heads!

But alas, I began to notice holes in the leaves. The kind of holes where you can see a shiny trail. Slugs had found my cabbage patch. Sometimes there were even dark gray slugs still attached to the leaves. Big ones, little ones, yuck! I began hand picking furiously, every morning at sunrise and again just before dark. Things finally began to look up and then the aphids (yet more bugs) hit. Did you ever see gray aphids in such an abundance that they look more like a waxy coating than individual bugs? Yessiree, that was my cabbage patch. I think, because this set-up of mine only required that I turn on the soaker hose and not lift the

cover and inspect my plants, things got way out of control. Had I seen the first few aphids I could have maybe blown them off with a spray of water, or waited until evening and sprayed with soap to smother the buggers. But once heads form and the aphids are within the overlapping leaves, you might as well call the party over and plant a cover crop instead. Live and learn.

Thankfully, this is not the end of the story. There were six cabbage transplants that I couldn’t fit in the raised bed. I planted them at the end of my broccoli row in the main garden. Although plagued with a few slugs, and even a few bugs, I was able to harvest each head and made my first ever batch of sauerkraut, totally just about two gallons worth! As my bounty dwindles near winter’s end, I am already strategizing this year’s cabbage crop. I am going to try growing an early variety to try and beat the worst of the bugs.

Although still not a fan of corned beef, cabbage has surely has found its place in my palate and in my garden.

Happy St. Patrick’s Day!

Roberta McQuaid graduated from the Stockbridge School of Agriculture at the University of Massachusetts. For the last 28 years, she has held the position of staff horticulturalist at Old Sturbridge Village. She enjoys growing food as well as flowers. Have a question for her? Email it to ekennedy@turley.com with “Gardening Question” in the subject line.

About working while collecting early Social Security benefits

By Russell Gloor

Dear Rusty: I will be 65 in August of this year. If I start drawing Social Security on my 65th birthday, how will my Social Security check be affected if I continue working at my full-time job, and take home \$1,380 every two weeks, until I reach my full retirement age?Signed: Working Senior

Dear Working Senior: Social Security has an “earnings test” which applies to anyone who collects benefits before they have reached their full retirement age, or FRA. There is also a “first-year rule,” which applies when someone claims benefits mid-year, prior to their full retirement age. The first-year rule says that if you exceed a monthly limit you aren’t entitled to benefits for that month, and that applies for each remaining month in the first year, after your benefits start. Then, starting in 2022, you’ll be subject to an annual earnings limit. Since you will reach your full retirement age in 2022, your annual limit that year will be a bit more than the 2021 FRA-year limit of \$50,520 (the earnings limits change annually).

If you claim Social Security to start in August when you are 65, for the remainder of 2021 you’ll be subject to a monthly earn-

ings limit of \$1,580. And if your gross earnings for each remaining month in 2021 are more than that, and yours would be, then you won’t be entitled to Social Security benefits for the remaining months of 2021.

For clarity, you would also have the option to request that the annual limit (\$18,960 for 2021) be used instead of the monthly limit, but at your earnings level you would still be required to repay all of your 2021 benefits, using the annual limit would require you to repay \$1 for every \$2 you are over the limit.

When you file your income taxes next year, Social Security will discover you exceeded the 2021 earnings limit and require you to repay all benefits received in 2021. By “repay,” I mean they will give you an option to repay everything they paid you in 2021 in a lump sum, or they will withhold future benefits until they recover what you owe because you exceeded the monthly limit. Alternatively, you could request a less severe repayment plan, but you would need to negotiate that directly with Social Security.

Essentially, if you plan to continue working full time in 2021, it may be wise to simply delay claiming your Social Security for a while, because you will end up needing to return any

benefits paid in 2021. You could still claim in August and then inform them you will exceed the limit; in which case they will simply withhold your benefits. But in any case, you won’t be eligible for Social Security benefits in 2021 at the earnings level you shared.

As explained above, your 2022 earnings limit will be more than the 2021 limit of \$50,520 for those achieving FRA, and if you claim benefits to start in January 2022 that higher annual limit would apply. If you’re still working full time at the same earnings level, you probably will not exceed the 2022 annual limit, so your benefits wouldn’t be affected. But if you get a raise and exceed the 2022 limit, Social Security will want back \$1 for every \$3 you exceeded the limit by the FRA-year rate.

Of course, since the earnings limit goes away when you reach your full retirement age, you might also consider just waiting until your FRA to claim Social Security and completely avoid the earnings test.

This article is intended for information purposes only and does not represent legal or financial guidance. It presents the opinions and interpretations of the AMAC Foundation’s staff, trained and accredited by the National

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A Quote

OF NOTE

“I don’t mind going back to Daylight Savings Time. With inflation, the hour will be the only thing I’ve saved all year.”

Victor Borge

Letters to the Editor Policy

Letters to the Editor have a maximum of 350 words. We require writers to include their name, address and phone number in order for our office to authenticate authorship prior to publication. Addresses and phone numbers are not published.

Unsigned or anonymous letters will NOT be published.

We reserve the right to edit or withhold any submissions. Libelous, unsubstantiated allegations, personal attacks or defamation of character are not allowed.

Deadline for submissions is Wednesday at noon.

Please email (preferred) letters to thesun@turley.com. Mailed letters can be sent to The Sun, 24 Water Street, Palmer, MA 01069.

BOARD, from page 1

During a call that lasted nearly 90 minutes, the board claimed that no malicious or fraudulent actions were taken and pledged to determine what contributed to the egregious pattern of financial malfeasance that spanned nearly five years.

Retirement board Chairman/Treasurer Richard Theroux and Executive Director Julianne Bartley claimed repeatedly that the board unknowingly made and approved expenditures that, at best, violated state statutes and, at worst, were blatantly fraudulent.

Officials on the call were unsatisfied with the board’s lengthy, but hollow explanations.

False Invoices

The first item discussed on March 3 involved approximately \$234,000 that was spent on 119 invoices for services never rendered, reviewed or documented. In response, Theroux said, “This is an issue with our website,” and that the scenario represents, “the reasons that we do have an audit.”

Board member Laurel Placzek, Agawam’s Treasurer/Tax Collector, expressed her desire to discover the source of the suspicious invoices.

“That is one of the things we need to look to see is if in any of the invoices [PERAC] is referring to, if we did have a contract, and if there was a conflict, then, obviously, an error was made in making these payments, and that error we are attempting to correct as soon as possible,” said Placzek.

Bank Service Charges

The board discussed a series of bank service charges that amounted to \$87,229. Bob Markel, Hampden Town Administrator, questioned why the board would elect to do service with a bank that charges fees.

“Why would the board switch to a bank that applies service charges when you have so much money on deposit? I don’t understand that, and the person who sent that in does not understand it,” said Markel, reading aloud a question submitted by an official in a neighboring Hampden County community.

Several board members explained that the financial institution that the board has long done business with merged with Bank of America, resulting in the switch to a bank that charges services fees.

Multiple attorneys in system

In violation of state statutes, the board made two attorneys members of its system, paying them a total of \$179,266 in legal fees and \$448,210 in premiums over the course of the audit. Most communities use employee money to pay 50% of premiums, but municipal employees were forced to pay 90% of the fees of attorneys associated with the retirement board during the audit.

Markel inquired if either attorney mentioned that is illegal for such action to be taken, to which Theroux noted that the board was simply attempting to save money and avoid conflicts of interest by hiring two individuals on a part-time basis.

Bartley added that, for 30 years, it had been part of the board’s standard operating procedure to have its attorneys enter the system. She was surprised to learn that such action was illegal.

“I, in particular, was not aware of the provisions of Chapter 34.B when it was enacted in 1998. I, at that time, was not the director of the system,” said Bartley. “This audit has, obviously, brought to our attention that we were in violation of that provision of that law. As recommended by the board, we have stopped treating the attorneys as employees.”

Since the release of the audit, both attorneys in question are no longer affiliated with the board. Bartley said that the board will soon create a new request for proposal for legal services.

“[The attorneys] were not aware of this provision of the law, nor was I,” said Bartley.

Travel expenses

Unexplained travel expenses were another big finding in the audit. For instance, Theroux allotted a total of \$1,825 for travel expenses for four business-related trips to Cape Cod.

The only problem was Theroux spent each trip in his own condo and had a neighboring resident sign documents claiming to verify that he stayed in nearby residences on each occasion.

When confronted about having committed possible fraud, Theroux declined to comment but did note that he repaid the money following the audit’s release.

“I would like to comment further to clear up this issue, but, unfortunately, at this point I cannot,” said Theroux, adding that the invoices were less than “any other lodging that was possibly available.”

Separately, several board members requested a total of \$7,983 from an investment firm to cover travel expenses to a conference. The firm wasn’t reimbursed until it was made clear that a violation occurred.

“Yes it was a violation, but it was not done maliciously; it was an oversight. We have now made the payment,” said Bartley.

Markel quickly questioned how the veteran board members were unaware of state law.

“It is not common knowledge amongst municipal employees and officials, reinforced every year by a requirement from the Ethics Commission, that no one can accept a gratuity of any kind above \$50? Was the board not aware of that and did the attorneys not advise the board that accepting was a direct violation of state statute,” said Markel.

Social Security

The audit went on to report that multiple board members earned thousands of dollars in Social Security despite a state statute that prohibits public employees from collecting social security.

“Every employee in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts knows that we are not a Social Security state,” said Markel. “It is more than astonishing that veteran municipal officials would not understand that. Secondly, if there was a question, consult the attorney, and then be told it is not legal to take out Social Security; you are a public employee in Massachusetts.”

Bartley again claimed that the action was the result of an oversight. She noted that the three members who received Social Security had been acting, contributing members of the system and subsequently retired.

“I wasn’t aware that they could be treated as retired annuitants of the system and, therefore we would not have to set up a separate retirement account for them,” said Bartley. “Since I have been informed that this was incorrect, I have subsequently sent a letter to Social Security to ask that the employer share of the \$4,800 be returned to the board because it was taken out in error.”

Salary increases and unexplained overtime

The audit reported a number of “unapproved” salary increases for Theroux that exceeded the permitted annual stipend of \$4,500. Despite having a vote and being Chairman/Treasurer, Theroux adamantly expressed his belief that this was permissible because he is “not a board member,” although he later rescinded the belief near the end of the meeting without explaining the stipend.

Additionally, the audit also identified that documents containing overtime information only listed staff names and salaries without indicating hourly wages or how many hours were worked.

Again, the board chalked its mistake up to an oversight, one that resulted from system-wide elections. Overtime was needed to ensure that the elections met mandated deadlines.

“The cost for running that election is well over \$10,000, and it is not anything that the board nor I can anticipate due to the fact that an individual can choose to

run and pick up nomination papers that are not due to the system until October, which is well after the budget is complete for that fiscal year,” said Bartley.

Moving forward, Bartley promised that the board will make hourly wages and amounts of overtime incurred more visible on the front of its yearly warrant.

Monthly financials

The PERAC audit also noted that the board exceeded its FY2017 budget by 6.5% or \$60,507. The board again blamed the occurrence on system-wide elections and their financial demand.

Bartley also explained that the board exceed the 2017 budget partially due to the, “retirement of a longtime staff member, who by contract, needed to be paid a buy-out one-time only of benefits she accrued and were payable to her upon notice of her retirement.”

Aftermath

Following the discussion on March 3, which extended well beyond the points mentioned above, officials on the conference call voiced their collective displeasure. Even if the board acted non-maliciously, Davenport questioned if the members could ever be trusted again.

“Given how many times we’ve heard today that the Chairman and Director were unaware and didn’t know the law or wasn’t sure or had no idea about certain things; do you have confidence that they can go forward and run this administration?” said Davenport, to which all five board members expressed that they should maintain their positions.

Theroux responded, categorizing the audit as being “disturbing.”

He promised to take action to ensure similar events do not unfold. However, he largely deflected blame, noting that the board’s value had risen to \$456,000,402 in December of 2020 with an average return

rate of 8.8%.

“I am more than proud of doubling this board’s assets over the past 10 years,” said Theroux. “I want to assure all of the active and retired members of the Hampden County Regional Retirement Board that [we are] an asset of this system for their retirement because why we’re here.”

The board noted that it has six months to offer further explanations for the misappropriation of funds, as PERAC will follow up in August or September. Another conference call could occur as soon as next month.

“We have been working on this daily to get the answers out given the gravity of this audit. We will continue to do that,” said Theroux.

SECURITY, from page 4

Social Security Association. NSSA and the AMAC Foundation and its staff are not affiliated with or endorsed by the Social Security Administration or any other governmental entity. To submit a question, visit our website (amac-foundation.org/programs/social-security-advisory) or email sadvisor@amac-foundation.org.

Russell Gloor is a Social Security advisor for AMAC.

OFFICER, from page 1

he will be fired over the video. Roca also claims he has been suspended from the department for violation of the department’s social media policy.

Morse also defended the integrity of the department and did not believe there was any wrongdoing happening there.

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	69							70						

CLUES ACROSS

1. Large dung beetle

7. Representation of a plan

13. In a fervid way

14. The Book of Psalms

16. Morning

17. Exactly the same

19. About

20. Brown and basmati are two

22. Swiss river

23. Philippine island

25. Expressions of surprise

26. An ant

28. Common Japanese surname

29. Deoxyribonucleic acid

30. Car mechanics group

31. A person’s brother or sister

33. Ancient pharaoh

34. Quantitative fact

36. Vividly colored bird

38. Your home has one

40. Organic compound

41. Section at the end of a book

43. Flat tableland with steep edges

44. Criticize

45. Split pulses

47. Brief trend

48. Cool!

51. Purposes

53. Brews

55. Skin condition

56. Pops

58. American air travel company

59. Minute bug

60. Anno Domini (in the year of Our Lord)

61. One who rides in your car

64. One of the Gospels

65. City in southern Spain

67. Inquisitive

69. Jean Paul __, author

70. Pop singer Harry

27. Endpoint

30. Indian instrument

32. Bleated

35. Cablegram (abbr.)

37. Root mean square (abbr.)

38. Jellyfishes

39. Individual TV installments

42. Talk

43. More (Spanish)

46. Leaseholder

47. Monetary units

49. Hostility

50. Work stations

52. Linguistics giant

54. Female sheep

55. Calendar month

57. Seasoning

59. Lofty nest of a bird of prey

62. Single Lens Reflex

63. A way to remove

66. Virginia

68. Old English

CROSSWORD ANSWER on page 9

The Holyoke Sun • MARCH 12, 2021 • 5

Duffy recounts first months in office

HOLYOKE – Newly-installed State Rep. Patricia Duffy shared her first newsletter since taking office in January:

I am very excited to be writing my first newsletter as State Representative of the Fifth Hampden District – Holyoke, only Holyoke, and all of Holyoke. I am pleased to announce the legislative committees I’ve been assigned to:

- Joint Committee on Health Care Financing
 - Joint Committee on Higher Education
 - Joint Committee on Cannabis Policy
 - Joint Committee on Veterans Services
 - House Committee on Global Warming
- What a Holyoke portfolio!

Seriously, these are perfect venues to serve the district and the Commonwealth. I work directly on policies that will impact Holyoke Medical Center, Holyoke Community College, Holyoke businesses, and the Holyoke Soldiers Home. Holyoke Medical Center is one of the last independent community hospitals in



Patricia Duffy

the state. It is also Holyoke’s largest employer, providing jobs as well as crucial services. Holyoke Community College is a local gem which not only provides a stepping stone to higher education but also workforce training and access to the healthcare and tourist economies that are crucial to our Pioneer Valley economy.

Holyoke is a microcosm of the Commonwealth as a whole – our challenges, resources, and community spirit reflect those of Massachusetts. While protecting our most vital institutions I can advocate for policies that lift up our entire state’s most vulnerable populations and establish an equitable recovery that takes advantage of our finest resources and shines a light on Holyoke as an example for all.

Obviously the biggest news coming out of the state this winter has been the rocky vaccine rollout. Holyoke was designated as a community in need so we did have a few more resources than those in surrounding areas but I have added my voice together with my colleagues that the

best rollout would have been guided by local public health officials.

In mid-February, I had the opportunity to visit the Children’s Museum at Holyoke. I had a wonderful tour of this family-friendly asset with the Executive Director, staff and members of the Board of Directors. As I said that day, supporting the Children’s Museum is always a priority as it’s a unique attraction that brings families to our great City Center. And of course, it’s even more important now as the Museum serves as such an important outlet to families in this crisis.

I’d also like to take this opportunity to introduce my legislative aide, Juan Anderson-Burgos. Not only is Juan a friend, he’s also already well-versed in constituent services and public responsibility because he’s my ward city councilor. And the fact that he’s bilingual reinforces our mission to prioritize outreach all over this city.

Should you need any assistance from my office, don’t hesitate to reach out. Our phone number is: (413) 529-4307.

Come talk to both of us by joining our Facebook Live Town Hall on Monday, March 29 at 6:30 p.m. Watch the Fifth Hampden Facebook page for details.

HPS conducting annual survey

HOLYOKE – The Holyoke Public School district is administering our annual survey for families, students and staff using the Panorama Culture and Climate Survey. The survey information will inform our improvement efforts at the school and district level, as we work together to be families’ first choice for their children’s education. The 2021 survey window is Feb. 22 to Mar. 12. Before March 12, we ask that parents and guardians take 2 minutes to complete a survey for each school in which you have a child attending. The survey was sent to families via text and email on Feb. 22

Students will also be completing a survey. They will receive instructions from their teachers on how to access the survey which will be administered during the school day.

All staff will receive an email directly from Panorama Education on Feb. 22 requesting feedback.

Panorama surveys measure the culture and climate of our district and we need your input to continue to strengthen our school and district improvement efforts. Please complete the surveys by March 12.

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Jourdain headed for the Ivy League gridiron

By Tim Peterson
Sports Correspondent

HOLYOKE – Since being named as the head coach of the Yale football team on Jan. 12, 2012, Tony Reno and his assistant coaches have recruited many talented high school football players from throughout the United States.

One area of the country where the Bulldogs coaching staff hadn't been able to recruit any high school players is Western Massachusetts.

Kevin Jourdain, Jr., a senior at Holyoke High School, will be the first player in at least the past nine years from a Western Mass. high school to wear a home uniform at the historic Yale Bowl next September.

"We first began recruiting Kevin when he was a junior at Holyoke High School and we've watched a lot of video on him," Reno said. "Kevin will be our first high school player from Western Mass that we've signed. He's a tremendous person with incredible skills. We can't wait to get him into our football program."

Jourdain, who's a defensive lineman, might be the first high school football player from Western Mass. to play at Yale in many years, but he isn't the first member of the Holyoke football team to play at the collegiate level. Several former Purple Knights players have played college football at places like AIC, Franklin Pierce, Westfield State, and Mass Maritime Academy. The last Holyoke football player to be a member of a Football Championship Subdivision



Jourdain, Jr. will get one final crack at high school action during the Fall 2 season.

(F.C.S.) team was Matt Girard, who played at Brown University.

"It's an honor for me to add my name to the list of former Holyoke football players who have played college football," Jourdain said. "I was interested in attending an Ivy League school because of their high standard of academics."

Five of the ten schools on Jourdain's recruiting list are Ivy League schools. They are Penn, Princeton, Harvard, Dartmouth, and Yale.

"I chose Yale because all of the coaches made me feel very comfortable," said Jourdain, who's listed at 6'4, 275. "While I was being

recruited, the assistant coaches would do zoom calls with me. They would talk about different things or go over film with me."

Jourdain was also recruited by Syracuse, which is a power-five school, UMass, Buffalo, Fordham, and Holy Cross.

"It was definitely a very hard decision for me to make," he said. "Syracuse is a great program, but I had a lot of other tempting offers from smaller schools. There is still the potential of playing in the NFL at an Ivy League school."

Jourdain, who's a high honor student in the classroom, is planning on studying economics at Yale.



Kevin Jourdain, Jr. will head for Yale this fall.

File photos

At his signing ceremony held at Holyoke High School, Jourdain thanked all of his football teammates and coaches for their help and support over the years. He also thanked Mark Rodrigues, who's one of the counselors at Holyoke High School.

"Kevin has worked very hard since coming into high school, both on and off the field," Rodrigues said. "I have been lucky to work with him and watch him develop not only as a student, but as a

person. It was a very proud moment watching him sign his letter of intent, because despite some of the help he received along the way, Kevin is the one who did the heavy lifting, and made it happen. He is a very mature young man who is ready for college, and will flourish."

Jourdain is looking forward to playing college football for coach Reno during the next four years.

See JOURDAIN, page 8

McDermott balancing variety of roles

SEEKONK – Whether it's been as a crew chief, spotter, driver, mechanic or in another role, Cam McDermott has built quite the resume in short-track racing. He started

his career driving in quarter midgets, quickly moved to the Thompson Speedway Modified division, where he won the championship -- and from there, his career has blossomed

in a variety of different directions.

For 2021, McDermott is going to be quite the busy guy once again -- but his preparations for the season includes getting the No. 8 Maybury Material Handling machine ready for competition in the six Tri Track Open Modified Series events. McDermott will be behind the wheel of the family-owned machine to join a talent-filled group of competitors on the Tri Track circuit.

"We're mainly going to focus on the Tri Track stuff this year, transitioning into that after focusing on the Stafford Motor Speedway Open Modified races the last few years," McDermott said. "The competition with Tri Track is always great. I want to go out there and compete



Cam McDermott serves a lot of roles on his racing team.

Submitted photo

See MCDERMOTT, page 8

Football season ready to get underway

By Gregory A. Scibelli
gscibelli@turley.com

REGION – For the first time ever, it will be football season in March and April, and teams will be playing into the warm instead of playing into the cold.

Rivalries will be renewed and the many games local fans love to see will take place over the next two months over the course of a six-week modified schedule.

While football was not played on Thanksgiving, some of the weather teams will play in during the first few weeks will feel like Thanksgiving. And some of the classic thanksgiving matchups will take place,

including Agawam versus West Springfield, Chicopee versus Chicopee Comprehensive, and East Longmeadow versus Longmeadow.

Another big matchup scheduled between smaller schools is a classic rivalry between Palmer and Ware. That game is usually the culmination of the Tri-County League schedule for both teams in the fall, but will be a great way for the two teams to renew acquaintances since no football was played last fall.

Minnechaug will have a full slate of games. Minnechaug has been a strong team in Division 3 the past few years,

See FOOTBALL, page 9

NECBL to bring in video technology to league venues

NORTH ADAMS – The New England Collegiate Baseball League has agreed to a partnership with Synergy Sports to implement the company’s innovative video technology into each of the league’s ballparks, in addition to adding TrackMan technology to its venues. The two globally renowned products represent the league’s grand vision to enhance the preparation and development for each player in every NECBL organization and to provide Major League Baseball (MLB) scouting departments with more access to player data than ever before.

As part of the agreement, each NECBL organization will install a six-camera Synergy Sports setup in their venues to record and log all game action, assisting coaches and student-athletes with game preparation and post-game review. The partnership also provides a teaching tool to allow coaches to work with student-athletes to develop their

skills through detailed analysis of practices and games.

NECBL coaching staffs will benefit from the efficiency of the Synergy Sports system, with teams receiving fully tagged footage of games delivered directly into an online platform for detailed analysis. Players will be better equipped to scout and prepare for their opponents, while also being able to analyze and breakdown their own highlights. All 30 MLB scouting departments across the league have already come to rely Synergy’s elite scouting video services, and now will be able to view every pitch from every NECBL game directly into their draft rooms.

Synergy Sports has built its success on proprietary technology which links meaningful sports data and video clips to create visual statistics and analytics about players, teams and games.

See NECBL, page 9

Wilbraham & Monson Academy announces hockey program revival

WILBRAHAM – After a 19-year hiatus, ice hockey is returning to Wilbraham & Monson Academy.

Beginning the winter of the 2021-2022 academic year, hockey at the club level will be added to the robust afternoon program at the Academy.

The program will begin with boys and girls playing at the club level, with the plan to build to high-level boys and girls varsity teams in the near future. The team will participate six days a week, like other WMA sports, and will include five days on the ice each week. Other days will consist of dryland training, utilizing WMA’s significant fitness facilities.

Spearheaded by Head of School Brian P. Easler, as well as alumni Barry Maloney ’85 and four-time Stanley Cup champion Bill Guerin ’89, and three-time Olympic medalist Kacey Bellamy, an exploratory committee including current parents, was assembled to consider the idea of

reviving the popular program.

“Hockey has been a part of the WMA history, and we look forward to it being part of the school’s future, for both girls and boys,” Easler said. “We have students who attend WMA and play for outside teams, and we are excited for them to have the opportunity to play for their school and help us build a competitive program we can all be proud of and which can serve the greater Springfield hockey community.”

Though a coach has yet to be named, enthusiasm within the network of current and former hockey players in the Academy’s student body and alumni communities, along with the opportunity to build a prep school program from the ground up, will no doubt be a draw for coaching candidates and, ultimately, the best coach for the WMA program.

See HOCKEY, page 9

JOURDAIN, from page 7

“I’ve spoken with coach Reno several times. He’s a nice guy and he wants to get to know you as a person,” Jourdain said. “He’s also a very knowledgeable football coach. He has built a winning program at Yale over the years.”

Reno, who lives with his family in Sturbridge, is the first Massachusetts resident to be the Yale football coach since 1910. He has posted a 47-33 overall record. The Bulldogs, who have been competing on the gridiron since 1872, won the Ivy League title outright in 2017. They tied for the league title in 2019.

Jourdain began playing football for the Holyoke Youth Football program.

“All of my coaches at the youth level taught me the fundamentals of the game,” he said. “From the pee wees to the seniors, I had a great experience

playing football and it was a ton of fun. It also helped prepared me to play football at the high school level.”

Kevin’s football coaches at the youth level were Joe Gleason, Mark Lubold, Micheal Cauley, Loni Westbrook, Billy McBride, Ed Vanderpool.

As an eighth grader, Jourdain helped senior team win the Super Bowl game.

“Winning the Super Bowl when I was in the eighth grade was a great accomplishment,” Jourdain said. “I don’t remember what the final score was, but we faced West Springfield at East Longmeadow High School on a really cold day.”

The following year, Jourdain was one of the youngest members of the Holyoke High School football team, which is coached by Joe Dutsar.



Kevin Jourdain, Jr.

“There were a lot of older guys who were in front of me when I was a freshman,” Jourdain said. “I just tried to do my best and I knew if I didn’t play in very many games that season, I still had three years remaining in my high school career.”

He began that season as the starting defensive tackle and became an offensive tackle in the middle of that season.

“We had watched Kevin play multiple games when he was in the eighth grade and he was a very talented football player at that level,” Dutsar said. “We had planned to bring him along a little bit slower than we actually did. We started him on defense because that’s where we thought he would make the most impact. Then we moved him to the left side of the offensive line and he fit right in. He just kept getting bigger

and stronger each year. I’ve coached a lot of players who have played college football, but to see Kevin graduate from Yale University will be the pinnacle of my coaching career. They’re getting a very talented football player and he’s going to do some big things there.”

A person who helped Kevin a lot during his recruiting process is his father, who shares the same name as him.

“My father is almost like my agent and were a team,” Kevin said. “He really helped me out a lot during the whole recruiting process. He talked to all of the college football coaches about me.”

Another one of Kevin’s biggest supporters is his mother, Shari.

“My mother is also a huge part of my life,” he said. “She used to drive me to all of my games when I was younger and she’s one of my biggest supporters.”

Kevin’s two younger sisters are Jackie and Allison.

MCDERMOTT, from page 7

against the best -- I love doing that. On the ownership side of Tri Track, with what Wayne (Darling) and Ed (Bennett) are doing, it’s good for the racers and the teams.”

Outside of driving, McDermott will be working as crew chief for Eddie Harvey Racing on the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour, with his close friend Woody Pitkat, driving. McDermott is ready to tackle that role after more than a decade working with the legendary Pasteryak family, where he recently was the crew chief for Chris Pasteryak. Back when McDermott was winning races and a championship in the Thompson Modifieds, McDermott was connected with the Pasteryak family, started helping Carl on his car, and from there, became a major part of the operation. During the last decade, he says he completed just about every job there is on a Modified race team, minus maybe being the jackman or gasman on a pit stop. He also has experience working with Woody Pitkat in Pitkat’s championship run at Stafford Motor Speedway, and when Pitkat was competing for Buzz Chew Racing on the NASCAR Whelen Modified Tour as a spotter.

McDermott’s driving experience also includes competing in the Lite Modified division at Thompson, where he was the champion, and at Stafford Motor Speedway, where he competed in the SK Light Modifieds and their premier SK Modified division.

And that’s just scratching the surface of his resume.

“It just grew from the Thompson Modified days and it got better and better,” McDermott said of his relationship with the Pasteryak family. “They are just a great family to be around. Between the Pasteryak family and my dad, I’ve learned everything I know about racing from them. The Pasteryak’s pay attention to every single detail. It’s such a great atmosphere to be able to learn from them and now transition it into my own car. I’ve been able to take everything I’ve learned and just put it into what’s best for me.”

With experience with the Pasteryak family, and now some offseason time with Harvey preparing for the new season, McDermott feels 2021 might be his best ever behind the wheel. His driving resume speaks for itself, with multiple wins and championships, but he’s lacking something he’s trying hard to get: a win in a Tour-Type Modified. He hopes to end that drought with Tri Track this year.

“It was definitely a learning curve jumping from the SK Modified to the Tour-Type Modified, I think the Tour-Type Modified really suits my style a lot better than the SK does,” McDermott said. “I’m not nearly as aggressive as everyone else to be dominant in the SK. Paying it out of your own pocket, it makes you definitely consider everything. As a family-owned team with my parents, in-laws, and a few close friends and good sponsors helping us out, and all the experience I have in a variety of different roles, it should be a good year.”

As most others, his goal is to come home with the car in one piece, have a solid run, and continue to build a notebook in hopes of visiting Victory Lane

with Tri Track. But he knows the level of talent the Tri Track field will offer in 2021 -- ranging from former series champions to Whelen Modified Tour champions, race winners, rising stars and more, will be tough to compete with. His immediate goal is going to be to qualify for the races, then worry about the rest once the green flag drops.

“I have a lot of experience coming from many different directions. I wouldn’t say that I know everything -- no one does in racing,” McDermott said. “There’s always a learning curve for everyone with new stuff coming out, new technology... but driving-wise I feel like I’m almost there. A good year for me would be to make all of the races, first. There is so much competition, and just qualifying is going to be difficult. If we can get into the races, then get some top-fives, I feel like that would be good. If you can get to the top-five, you can compete for wins.”

Tri Track will visit three of New England’s historic race tracks -- Monadnock Speedway, Seekonk Speedway and Star Speedway during the season -- and McDermott does have limited experience with all of them, driving previously in Tri Track races, where he does have top-10 finishes.

“I’ve run all three tracks before and I like Star a lot, we always seem to be really competitive there,” McDermott said. “We ran Seekonk at the Haunted Hundred in 2019 and we were competitive until the last lap, when we went through the infield in the middle of chaos in front of us. I like both of those tracks a lot. I still haven’t gotten my hands around Monadnock yet. The one time we went there we were

fast, but broke a trailing-arm bracket, so we don’t really know how that day would have ended. My dad grew up at Seekonk -- he ran Street Stocks there and I grew up in the grandstands there. I’m looking forward to running there again.”

Without his parents, in-laws, a few close friends and sponsors like Maybury Material Handling, Douglas Battery, Richard Green Insurance and McDermott Motorsports Services, McDermott wouldn’t be in the position he is now. The support from his wife -- Lauren -- who raced previously herself, has been a major player in his career. He’s hoping to balance his past experience with his current roles and help himself grow as a driver en route to victory lane in 2021.

“We’re going to enjoy it,” McDermott said. “I was with the Pasteryak’s for all of the years and still ran my own team at the same time, so I think we will be good. I think you learn a lot about the cars and that helps you understand everything a lot better when you’re in a variety of roles like I have been in. I come from an engineering background and I think if you understand everything, the more you do the better you will be at everything.”

“Just being able to get the opportunity to do what I do now is because of all of the people that have supported me in my career. Everyone is always pushing me to be better. All of my experiences have been great and I look to continue on with it this year.”

Registration for the 2021 Tri Track season is open, and teams can register at TriTrackModifieds.com/team-info. Teams have the option to either sign-up for the whole season or just one single race.

Notice of Public Hearing
The DGR Committee of the Holyoke City Council will hold a public hearing on **Monday, March 29, 2021 at 6:30pm** to hear a Special Permit Application of Anthony W Dominguez for Nonconforming structures, other than single and two family structures per section 4.7.3 of the Holyoke Zoning Ordinance to change property/building from non-conforming to conforming for personal use of garage as a storage area and for vehicle at 50 Upland Rd (167-00-075)
Meeting will take place remotely and can be accessed via www.zoom.us Meeting ID: 835 0197 1274 Meeting Passcode: 166528 or by call in at 1 (929)205-6099 with same Meeting ID and Passcode.
Written public comment can be submitted to public-comment@holyoke.org. For information on this application please contact City Council Admin. Assistant Jeffery Anderson-Burgos at anderson-burgosj@holyoke.org or by phone at (413) 322-5525
DGR Chair: David Bartley
03/12, 03/19/2021

RECEIVER'S NOTICE OF SALE OF REAL ESTATE
By virtue of an Order for Appointment of Receiver issued by the Western Division Housing Court in the case entitled "City of Holyoke v. Estate of Robert Ezold, et als", Docket No. 17-CV-1036 dated March 16, 2018, recorded with the Hampden District Registry of Deeds in Book 22177, Page 377, Order Replacing Receiver dated June 26, 2019, recorded in Book 23652, Page 497; and pursuant to an Order on February 19, 2021, Authorizing Enforcement of Receiver's Priority Lien under M.G.L. Ch. 111 §127I, the Receiver, Block Capital, LLC, hereby gives notice of its intent to foreclose on its Lien regarding the premises located at 57 Norwood Terrace, Holyoke, Massachusetts on **March 29, 2021 at 11:00 a.m.** at the premises. The premises are

described as follows:
A certain parcel of land with the buildings thereon situated in said Holyoke, known and designated as Lot Number Twelve (12) on a Plan of Lots of Norwood Terrace Extension, and recorded in Hampden County Registry of Deeds, Book of Plans "Z" Page 35.
Said Lot is more particularly bounded and described as follows:
EASTERLY
by Norwood Terrace sixty (60) feet;
SOUTHERLY
by Lot #11 on said Plan, one hundred twenty-three and fifty-two one hundredths (123.52) feet;
WESTERLY
by land of owners unknown, sixty (60) feet; and
NORTHERLY
by Hicks Avenue, one hundred twenty-three and fifty-two one hundredths (123.52) feet.
Being the same premises conveyed to Robert J. Ezold and Ellen Moriarty Ezold by deed recorded with Hampden District Registry of Deeds in Book 3922, Page 87.
The Receiver reserves the right to postpone the sale to a later date by public proclamation at the time and date appointed for the sale and to further postpone at any adjourned sale date by public proclamation at the time and date appointed for the adjourned sale date. The Receiver further reserves the right to open the bidding at the time, date and place appointed for sale, and if no bids are received, or the bids received are deemed unacceptable to Receiver, to postpone the sale to a later date by public proclamation.
In the event that the successful bidder at the foreclosure sale shall default in purchasing the within described property according to the terms of this Notice of Sale and/or the terms of the Memorandum of Sale executed at the time of the foreclosure, the Receiver reserves the right to sell the property by

Receiver's Foreclosure Deed to the second highest bidder provided that the second highest bidder shall deposit with Receiver's attorneys the amount of the required deposit as set forth herein within three (3) business days after written notice of default of the previous highest bidder and title shall be conveyed to said second highest bidder within twenty (20) days of said written notice.
The premises will be sold subject to any and all unpaid taxes and other municipal assessments and liens, and subject to prior liens or other enforceable encumbrances of record entitled to precedence over the Receiver's lien, and subject to and with the benefit of all easements, restrictions, reservations and conditions of record and subject to all tenancies and/or rights of parties in possession.
Terms of the Sale: Cash, cashier's or certified check in the sum of \$10,000.00 as a deposit must be shown at the time and place in order to qualify as a bidder (the Receiver and its designee(s) are exempt from this requirement); high bidder to sign Memorandum of Sale upon acceptance of bid; balance of purchase price payable in cash or by certified check in thirty (30) days from the date of that sale at the offices of the Receiver's attorney: Murphy & Lupan, P.A., 5 Commonwealth Road, 4th Floor, Natick, MA 01760, or such other time as may be designated by the Receiver. The description of the premises contained in the Deed to Robert J. Ezold and Ellen Moriarty Ezold recorded with Hampden District Registry of Deeds in Book 3922, Page 87 shall control in the event of a typographical error in this publication. Other terms to be announced at the sale.
Block Capital, LLC, Receiver
By its Attorney:
Michael J. Murphy, Esq.
Murphy & Lupan, P.A.
5 Commonwealth Road, 4th Floor
Natick, MA 01760
(508) 650-9252
02/26, 03/05, 03/12/2021

Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD21P0369EA
Estate of:
Frederick A Meichner
Date of Death: 12/03/2020
CITATION ON PETITION FOR FORMAL ADJUDICATION
To all interested persons:
A Petition for **Formal Probate of Will with Appointment of Personal Representative** has been filed by **John J Ferriter** of Holyoke, MA requesting that the Court enter a formal Decree and Order and for such other relief as requested in the Petition.
The Petitioner requests that: **John J Ferriter** of Holyoke, MA be appointed as Personal Representative(s) of said estate to serve **Without Surety** on the bond in an **unsupervised** administration.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 03/31/2021.**
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
UNSUPERVISED ADMINISTRATION UNDER THE MASSACHUSETTS UNIFORM PROBATE CODE (MUPC)
A Personal Representative appointed under the MUPC in an unsupervised administra-

tion is not required to file an inventory or annual accounts with the Court. Persons interested in the estate are entitled to notice regarding the administration directly from the Personal Representative and may petition the Court in any matter relating to the estate, including the distribution of assets and expenses of administration.
WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 03, 2021
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/12/2021
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD19P1663EA
Estate of:
Cynthia Susan Naugler
Also known as:
C. Susan Naugler
Date of Death: 07/23/2019
CITATION ON PETITION FOR ORDER OF COMPLETE SETTLEMENT
A Petition for **Order of Complete Settlement** has been filed by **Jennifer L Hamilton of Easthampton MA** requesting that the court enter a formal Decree of Complete Settlement including the allowance of a final account, a determination of testacy and heirs at law and other such relief as may be requested in the Petition.
IMPORTANT NOTICE
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this court before: **10:00 a.m. on the return day of 04/09/2021.**
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to

file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an affidavit of objections within thirty (30) days of the return day, action may be taken without further notice to you.
WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court
Date: March 09, 2021
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/12/2021
Commonwealth of Massachusetts
The Trial Court
Hampden Probate and Family Court
50 State Street
Springfield, MA 01103
(413)748-7758
Docket No. HD17P1987EA
In the matter of:
Ruth Helen Roddy
Date of Death: 07/13/2017
CITATION ON PETITION FOR ALLOWANCE OF ACCOUNT
To all interested persons:
A Petition has been filed by: **Cheryl A Parker of Southampton MA** requesting allowance of the first account(s) as Personal Representative and any other relief as requested in the Petition.
You have the right to obtain a copy of the Petition from the Petitioner or at the Court. You have a right to object to this proceeding. To do so, you or your attorney must file a written appearance and objection at this Court before **10:00 a.m. on 04/06/2021.**
This is NOT a hearing date, but a deadline by which you must file a written appearance and objection if you object to this proceeding. If you fail to file a timely written appearance and objection followed by an Affidavit of Objections within thirty (30) days of the return date, action may be taken without further notice to you.
WITNESS, Hon. **Barbara M Hyland**, First Justice of this Court.
Date: March 01 , 2021
Rosemary A Saccomani
Register of Probate
03/12/2021

FOOTBALL, from page 7

playing twice in the finals in recent years against powerful Central High School. They will also meet several other rivals, like Longmeadow and East Longmeadow.
Another team that is normally part of the powerful AA Conference is Holyoke High School. Holyoke will renew acquaintances with both Minnechaug and Agawam during the abbreviated football season.
The football season is especially significant for Holyoke because the Knights as a school, will be participating in an athletic conference for the first time since Oct. 21, when the fall season was cut short in the city because Holyoke entered its third straight week of being in the red, high-risk for COVID-19 spread category. At that point, Holyoke officials stopped playing off all sports, cancelling

the remainder of the fall season. Holyoke remained in the red category due to the second surge for four months, and officials cancelled the winter season while other schools in the red chose to participate in the basketball, hockey, and swimming season.
Holyoke finally went into the yellow two weeks ago, and green-lighted the Fall 2 season, allowing football, girls volleyball, unified basketball, and cheerleading to take place. The Knights are currently scheduled to play in the second week of the season, on March 26 against Minnechaug. The Knights are not currently scheduled for a Week 1 game.
The rest of the schedules are on miaa.net for most teams. The football season is set to conclude at the end of April, so teams can move into the abbreviated spring season, which will go from early May to the very end of June.
There will be no playoffs for the football season.

NECBL, from page 8

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HOCKEY, from page 8

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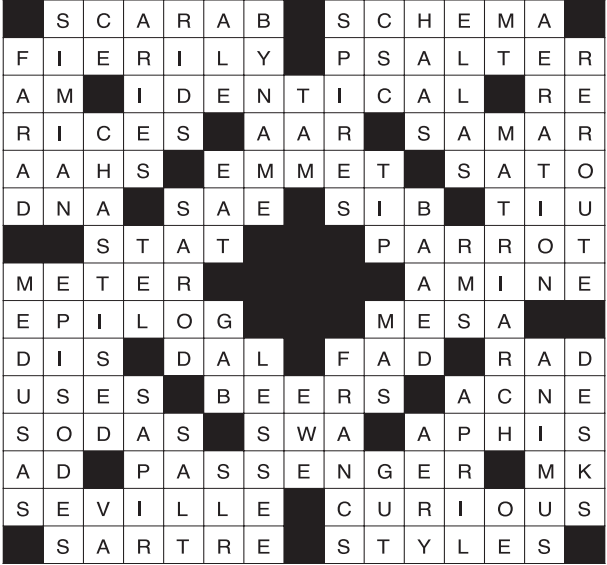
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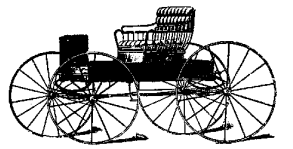
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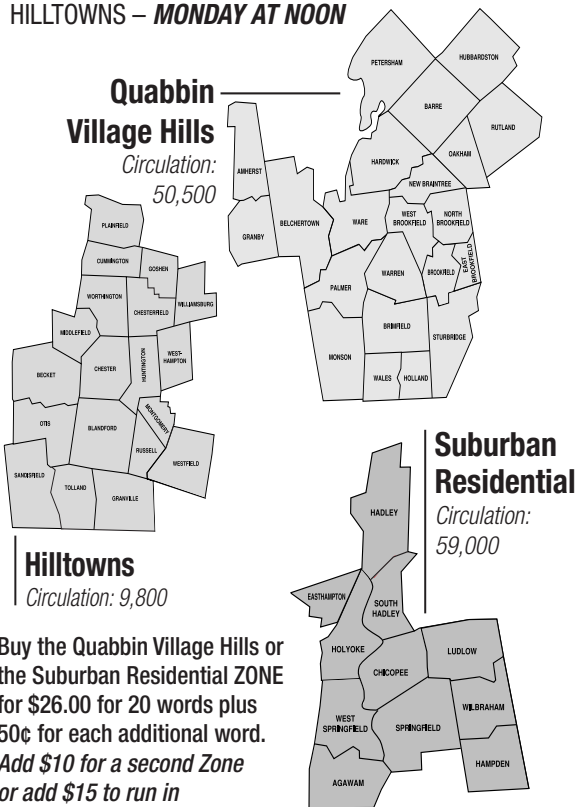
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New trampoline park opening at Holyoke Mall

HOLYOKE – Altitude Trampoline Park, the place for play, every day, will hold their Grand Opening in Holyoke on Friday, March 12. The world's premier trampoline facility will be satisfying fun lovers of all ages with an inviting park designed to maximize playfulness and optimize joy. The facility at Holyoke Mall packed with over 21,000sqft of indoor trampolines and other activities will introduce the excitement of active, family-friendly fun to the area. Home to memorable birthday parties, family celebrations and group events as well, Altitude invites the community to experience the "Jump Life" safely with their C3 "Certified Cleanliness" program, limited capacity levels and plenty of room for social distancing.

As part of their Grand Opening celebration, Altitude will be offering limited Founding Memberships at \$10 down and \$10 per month. "We are thrilled to be opening this trampoline park as a great addition to the Holyoke communi-

ty. Altitude guests will be able to bring the whole family to enjoy programs like Junior Jumpers Jam, Friday Light Friendly, Saturday Light Flight and more. These programs along with our monthly memberships starting at just \$10 to join and \$10 a month, the value really can't be beat" said Victor Rodriguez, General Manager at Altitude Trampoline Park Holyoke.

Altitude Trampoline Park is committed to setting the standard for family entertainment. Since the opening of the first park in 2012, Altitude has opened more than 70 facilities on three continents. Their success as the second largest trampoline park in the United States is a result of their dedication to customer service, cleanliness and above all, safety. Altitude Trampoline Park Holyoke is the most recent location to be opening in North America and features a host of attractions such as Main Court, Ninja Course, Extreme Dodgeball, Battle Beam, Laser Maze, VR and coming soon a full

redemption arcade. Altitude's goal is to provide a quality guest experience with the best pricing, sanitation standards and guest services in the industry.

"We'll be glad to see the Altitude Trampoline Park Holyoke open its doors to the community with the energy and spirit that speaks to our evolving brand," said Victor. "The Altitude family is eager to celebrate the grand opening of this park while fulfilling our commitment to ensuring safe, clean fun for each guest in the Holyoke area we are proud to serve." Altitude strives to be part of the community with fundraising opportunities for schools, youth groups, sports programs and more.

Altitude Holyoke's hours of operation will be as follows:

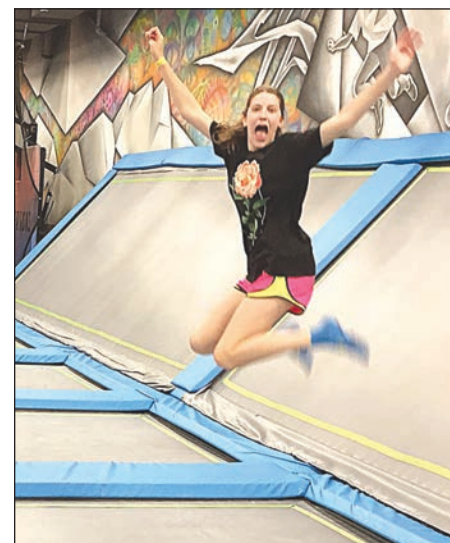
Monday – Thursday: 12 noon to 8 p.m.

Friday & Saturday: 12 noon to 9 p.m.

Sunday: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

For more information about Altitude Trampoline Park, visit www.altitudeholyo.com or follow them on <https://www.facebook.com/AltitudeHolyoke/>

For more information about how Altitude Trampoline Park is keeping guests safe, please visit them here.



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SEEKING NEXT LEADER! Enlace de Familias, a grassroots non-profit in Holyoke that provides support and advocacy, community mobilization, and training to empower families, is seeking its next Executive Director. Visit the Open Searches page at www.eostransitions.com for info.

Read your local newspaper online at www.newspapers.turley.com

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TOWN OF GRANBY, CHIEF OF POLICE The Town of Granby seeks a community-oriented, qualified individual for the full-time position of Chief of Police. Appointed by the Selectboard and under the administrative oversight of the Town Administrator, the Chief of Police is the chief administrative officer of the Granby police department in a union/non-union working environment in accordance with M.G.L. Chapter 41, Section 97A serving as the final department authority in all matters of policy, operations and employee discipline as well as short and long-term planning, administration, staffing, rules and regulations within the Department and for the enforcement of all laws and bylaws within the town of Granby's legal jurisdiction as well as coordination with outside agencies/departments on law enforcement-related matters. Minimum education required is a bachelor's degree, with a master's degree preferred, in criminal justice, public administration or related field and a minimum of ten years progressively responsible experience in the law enforcement field with at least five years' experience at a command or supervisory level, or equivalent combination of education, training and experience which provides the required knowledge, skills and abilities to perform the essential functions of the job. Salary to be negotiated but expected to be approximately \$100,000 +/- . Excellent benefits package including paid vacation time, sick time, personal time and enrollment in the Hampshire County Retirement System. Submit cover letter, resume and relevant certification(s) postmarked no later than April 20, 2021 to Chief of Police Search, C/O Selectboard Office, 10-B W. State St, Granby, MA 01033 or electronically, time stamped no later than 12:00 p.m. April 20, 2021 to cmartin@granby-ma.gov.

TOWN OF WILBRAHAM, ADMINISTRATIVE ASSISTANT/DATA COLLECTOR Looking for a reliable Administrative Assistant/Data Collector. For application and more information please visit www.wilbraham-ma.gov. Application Deadline 3/26/2021 at 4:30PM. EOE

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U.S. Attorney's Office reminds public of CDC eviction moratorium order

BOSTON – As part of the federal response to the COVID-19 outbreak, the U.S. Attorney's Office is reminding landlords of their obligations and tenants of their rights under the Centers for Disease Control's Order temporarily halting residential evictions of tenants who meet certain income eligibility requirements and who are unable to pay their full rent due to substantial loss of household income, loss of compensable hours of work or wages, a lay-off, or extraordinary out-of-pocket medical expenses. The order prohibits landlords from evicting such tenants for non-payment of rent from Sept. 4, 2020 to March 31.

In Sept. 2020, the CDC issued a fed-

eral Order imposing a temporary halt in residential evictions to prevent the further spread of COVID-19. The order aims to mitigate the spread of COVID-19 by enabling people who get sick or who are at risk for severe illness from COVID-19 to protect themselves and others by staying in one place to quarantine.

Under the CDC Order, tenants who meet income eligibility requirements (generally, those earning less than \$99,000 per year, or \$198,000 if filing jointly) and who are unable to pay their full rent due to substantial loss of household income, loss of compensable hours of work or wages, a lay-off, or extraordinary out-of-pocket medical expenses

can obtain protection from eviction by providing a sworn declaration regarding their situation to their landlord. Once this declaration is provided, a landlord is prohibited from evicting the tenant while the moratorium remains in effect, and is subject to substantial penalties, including fines of up to \$250,000 and up to a year in jail.

The order is not intended to prevent landlords from starting eviction proceedings, but rather to stop the actual eviction of a covered person for non-payment of rent. Moreover, the order does not affect the obligation of tenants to pay rent, nor does it bar the collection of fees, penalties, and interest.

For questions or reports of violations of the Order please email USAMA.CivilRights@usdoj.gov or call 617-275-8756 and leave a message. More information on the CDC Order is available here.

Federal resources are available through the Consumer Financial Protection Bureau to assist landlords with mortgage relief here.

The Civil Rights Unit of the U.S. Attorney's Office was established in 2015 with the mission of enhancing federal civil rights enforcement.

For more information on the office's civil rights efforts, please visit www.justice.gov/usao-ma/civil-rights.



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MAYOR from page 1

pleted, allowing McGee to return to the city council as well as his regular employment as soon as the election is over.

The Charter and Rules Committee is schedule to meet on Monday night, March 15, with the full council scheduled to meet on Tuesday, March 16. The full council could vote on the order at that meeting.

There are two candidates for the may-

or's seat, City Councilor Rebecca Lisi, and School Committee member Devin Sheehan. Both declared their intentions in January. Rumors have surfaced that Councilor Mike Sullivan is also going to announce a run for mayor, but as of press time, he has not made a formal announcement. Sullivan's entrance into the race would necessitate a preliminary election in September to narrow the mayor's race to two candidates.



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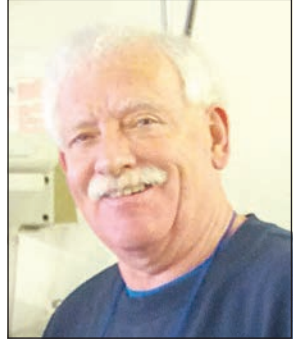
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